Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*)

The emerald ash borer (EAB) is a very small but very destructive beetle. Metallic green in color, its slender body measures 1/2 inch in length and 1/8 inch wide. EAB attacks only ash trees (Fraxinus spp.) All true ashes—green, white, blue, and black—are at risk. The insect lays its eggs in crevices in the tree's bark.

The larvae then bore into the tree and feed beneath the bark.

The distinct serpentine larval tunnels are readily visible when the bark is removed from infested trees. Tunnels excavated by feeding larvae interrupt the transport of nutrients and water within the tree during the summer.

It is difficult to detect emerald ash borer in newly infested trees. We cannot count on natural predation to control EAB. The beetle has no known predators in North America, although woodpeckers will eat them. Jagged holes excavated by woodpeckers feeding on pre-pupal larvae may be the first sign that a tree has become infested.

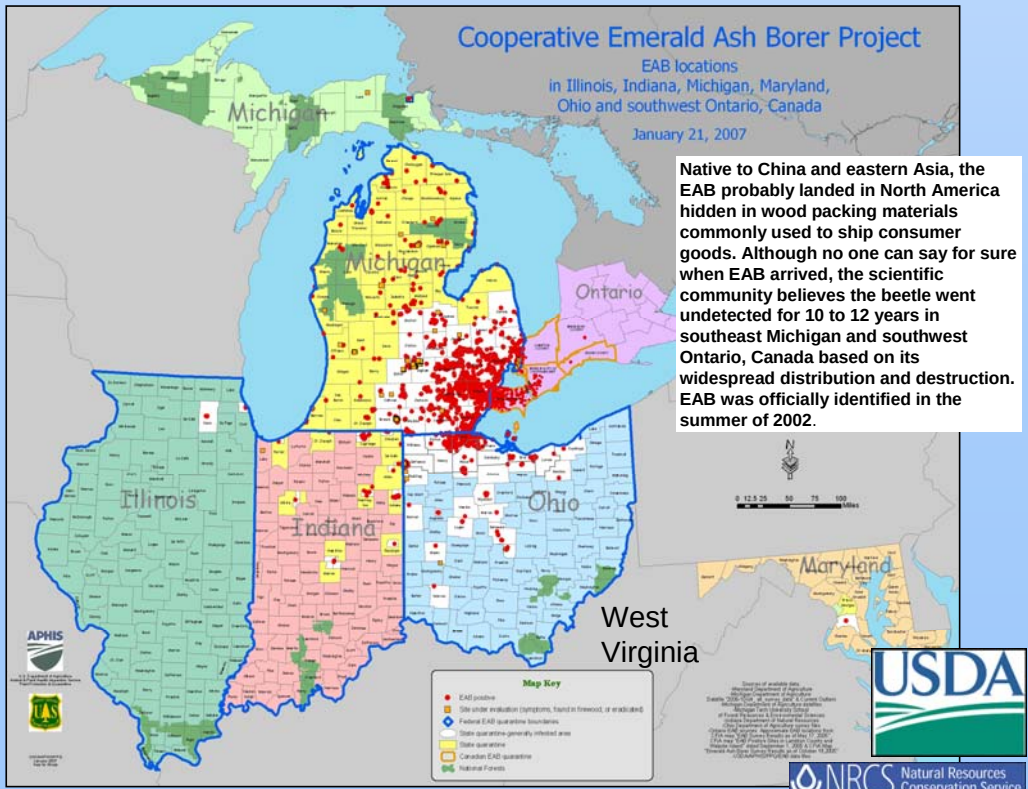
EAB infestation is always fatal to ash trees. Infested trees will decline from the top down, even if the trees were healthy before being attacked by EAB.

Foliage wilts and the tree canopy becomes increasingly thin and sparse as branches die. Many trees appear to lose about 30 to 50% of the canopy after 2 years of infestation. Trees often die after 3-4 years of infestation.

Epicormic shoots may arise on the trunk of the tree, often at the margin of live and dead tissue.

When a tree has been infested for at least one year, the D-shaped exit holes left by emerging adults will be present on the branches and the trunk.

The loss of all of America's ash trees is a real possibility. An effort is underway to gather seed from populations of native ash tree species nationwide—**The National Ash Seed Collection Initiative**.



Native to China and eastern Asia, the EAB probably landed in North America hidden in wood packing materials commonly used to ship consumer goods. Although no one can say for sure when EAB arrived, the scientific community believes the beetle went undetected for 10 to 12 years in southeast Michigan and southwest Ontario, Canada based on its widespread distribution and destruction. EAB was officially identified in the summer of 2002.

National Ash Seed Collection Initiative

Your help is needed to ensure that the ash tree's genetic heritage is preserved

The National Ash Tree Seed Collection Initiative is led by the NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center in East Lansing, Michigan. Seed from diverse ash populations are being preserved.

Staff at Rose Lake sort and classify the submitted seeds before sending them to a USDA Forest Service facility for x-ray analysis. X-ray analysis helps determine which seeds are viable for preservation.

What you can do:

Collect ash tree seeds in late summer to fall through the National Ash Seed Collection Initiative.

Don't move firewood. You can unknowingly contribute to the spread of EAB by moving firewood. EAB larvae may be hiding under the bark.

If you receive ash nursery stock, know its point of origin and your supplier.

Visually inspect your trees. If trees display any sign or symptom of EAB infestation, contact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Spread the word. Public awareness and education is an ongoing process; support the effort.

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